

Precious Trials

“That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:7).

When my wife and I and two of our daughters were privileged to visit Alaska, for the fun of it we went to an old gold mine near Juneau and panned for gold. With our pans in our hands, we diligently and patiently sifted through the sluice box of gravel and clay. In the end, we surely couldn't celebrate like the gold diggers with their valuable finds during the gold rush of the 1800s, for we only found a few shavings that were basically of no worth.

Because of an unstable world economy, we are hearing much about investing in gold in this age. Of all the precious metals, gold has always been the most popular as an investment. It has been explained, “Investors generally buy gold as a hedge or safe haven against any economic, political, social or currency-based crises.” These crises usually involve investment market declines, currency failure, inflation, war, and social unrest.

While gold is a valuable metal, there is something that is more highly appraised. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Simon Peter proclaimed that “the trial of your faith” is “much more precious than . . . gold.” The word “precious,” which means “of great price,” occurs five times in the Epistles of Peter. In this first reference, we are confronted with “Precious Trials,” and just why they are precious. Let's examine the text together.

Our trials are precious because they purge us! As gold is refined by the fire, and the dross revealed and removed, so our conflicts are used of God to purge out the dross of the self-life. God cannot ignore the inward unbelief, self-dependence, rebellion, and iniquities that we attempt to ignore. And through our refining trials, He graciously brings these to the surface and purges us from them.

Our trials are precious because they prove us! The refining process evidences that we are genuine believers. The “faith” that is tried in the fire of spiritual trials is genuine faith. Spurious faith, or pretentious faith, which is no faith at all, never knows the purging work of grace. The faith that God grants to His believing people is a faith that will be tried, can be tried, must be tried, and the trials themselves prove that it is bona fide faith.

Our trials are precious because they prepare us! According to our text, not only are we promised that Jesus Christ will return for His people, but believers and the faith within their bosom must be tried to ready them for His “appearing.” Purged faith, proven faith, persevering faith will be “found unto praise and honour and glory” when Jesus appears. The Lord's purpose in His people will be accomplished and He will be glorified.